

FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 2

You remember Part 1, of course (how could you ever forget it). Well, just in case you don't the makers of Part 2 include a long chunk of Part 1 at the start of Part 2 to refresh your memory. We see the lone survivor, Alice (*Adrienne King*) once again behead the mad killer, Mrs Voorhees (*Betsy Palmer*), and escape into the lake in a boat, only to have the grotesque shape of Mrs Voorhees' drowned son rise out of the water and grab her.

Now I presumed, and so did Alice, that this last bit was all a dream but it turns out that Mrs Voorhees' deformed son, Jason, isn't dead but has been living wild in the woods since the time of his disappearance (in which case why didn't he make contact with his beloved mother?)

Time has passed but poor Alice, not surprisingly, is still dreaming about her unusual experiences as holiday camp counsellor and still feeling very jittery. And it turns out she has good reasons to feel jittery, for Jason, despite having a face like an exploded turnip and the IQ of a mollusc, has somehow succeeded in tracking her down to her city apartment (how he did this while wearing a bag over his head as well is a big mystery—perhaps the answer will be in part 3). First, he leaves a nasty surprise among the fish fingers in Alice's refrigerator—his mother's head—and then he... but no, I can't go on.

Five years later a fresh bunch of young camp counsellors are preparing to open a summer camp right near the site of the old one. They've heard rumours about Jason lurking in the woods but for some reason don't seem to be aware that a massacre took place there. As before the girls are all young

and nubile (*very nubile*) and the men handsome and muscular, even the one in the wheelchair. The main difference is that there are a lot *more* of them this time and I was puzzled how the mad killer would be able to get through them all in the time allotted. At the very least he would develop a bad case of killer's elbow or whatever. But lo! the script writer solves this problem by having half the group go off for a night on the town and it's only the ones left behind in the camp who become the victims.

Some quick hacking, stabbing, chopping and slicing and before you know it there's only one girl victim left and being chased all over the place by the mad killer, just like Part 1. And as in Part 1 no matter how many times she apparently gets rid of the killer up he pops again like the Coyote in the *Road Runner* cartoons. Like all the mad killers in these sort of films he obviously has the constitution of a horse (perhaps it's all that outdoor living).

Friday the 13th Part 2 is really just a carbon copy of Part 1. Producer/director Steve Miner, who was Associate Producer and Production Manager on the first film, and writer Ron Kurz, have simply remade Part 1, repeating most of the key sequences almost shot for shot. And yet—surprise!—it all works. Even though I knew what was coming the film still had me on the edge of my seat. Well, no—actually it had me sinking *down* into my seat while I peered at the screen through my fingers, something I haven't done at a horror film since I was knee high to a jolly jumbuck (whatever that is).

It may be tacky, cheaply made and unoriginal but the basic formula, established in the first film by Sean Cunningham, is fool-proof. The remote setting, the lurking killer,

the victims remaining oblivious to what is going on even as they get picked off one by one, the final, extended chase that turns into pure nightmare—it all adds up to kind of rollercoaster ride of horror that works its effects on you even though you are fully aware of the mechanics of the ride itself. If all you're looking for in a horror film is a series of nerve-twanging jolts then I guarantee you won't be disappointed with **Friday 13th Part 2**.

But now onto the sticky question of the film's morality—and I've got to admit that the feminists will have a point when they point their accusing fingers at it and cry 'This movie exploits women!' It's the way the camera lingers over all that young female flesh—flesh that is inevitably doomed—that creates a distinctly queasy feeling (there are just as many male victims but they don't take off as many clothes beforehand). It's as if it's a kind of meat market where we're invited to lick our lips over the live product before it enters the slaughter house to be turned into hamburger... Perhaps it's not so much the exploitation of women that I find vaguely disturbing here but the way the film links violence with sex in a more obvious way than other films of this genre. It seems to be saying that you can't have one without the other...

Then again you could turn this around and claim that the film's message is a highly moral one—that naughty behaviour before marriage inevitably leads to violent death and that even taking your clothes off for reasons unconnected with the bathroom can lead to instant retribution involving the loss of limbs etc. It's a message I'm sure that Mary Whitehouse would heartily approve of.

REVIEW BY JOHN BROSNAH

